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Letter dated 22 July 2009 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement by the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation in connection with the seventieth anniversary of the start of the Second World War and request circulation of the statement as a document of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly under agenda item 7 (see annex).

(*Signed*) Vitaly **Churkin**

09-43139 (E) 310709 040809

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Annex to the letter dated 22 July 2009 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement by the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation in connection with the seventieth anniversary of the start of the Second World War

Moscow, 18 July 2009

On the eve of the seventieth anniversary of the start of the Second World War, the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation calls on the international community to conduct an honest and unbiased assessment of the causes and consequences of that historic event.

The Second World War, which began on 1 September 1939, was the most terrible tragedy of the twentieth century. It claimed tens of millions of human lives. The memory of its victims must remain pure, untainted by all manner of distortions to suit the current political situation.

History has delivered its verdict: the leaders of Nazi Germany were the main perpetrators of that tragedy. The international military tribunal in Nuremberg characterized their actions in unleashing a war of aggression as the gravest crime against humanity. The international community has recognized that judgement to be final and irreversible.

The Second World War resulted from irreconcilable conflicts between States, their selfish ambitions and their aggressive aspirations, which had been mounting since the early 1920s.

At the same time, it must be remembered that, in pursuit of their own goals, political forces ruling in certain influential European States up until the very beginning of the Second World War impeded the establishment in Europe of an effective collective security system, which in those days was impossible without the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics just as it is impossible without Russia today. Moscow's foreign policy in the 1930s may be viewed in different ways — it is a matter of interpretation; but the indisputable fact is that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics consistently advocated the establishment of an all-European system of mutual commitments and guarantees to prevent large-scale military conflict. Unfortunately, its position was not supported by other States when Hitler's Germany was unilaterally dismantling the Versailles-Washington system of international relations that came into being after the First World War, or at the time of the Anschluss of Austria, or when with the aim of "appeasing" Hitler he was given the right to decide the future of Czechoslovakia, a sovereign European state.

The Second World War was not only a horrendous ordeal but also a lesson for all humankind, which, having survived that tragedy, built up in the years after 1945 a system of international relations based on the fundamental principles of democracy, mutual respect and renunciation of the use of force, which are the very foundations of the United Nations and other international organizations.

However, on the eve of this painful anniversary, in some European countries, including countries that fought on the side of Hitler's Germany, and in some

international parliamentary bodies, active attempts are being made to reinterpret the real causes of Second World War and to apportion equal responsibility for starting the war to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Hitler's Germany, and at the same time to exonerate those who became Hitler's accomplices, who committed crimes in the territories of the countries occupied by the Nazis and who went down to defeat with the Third Reich.

The Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation firmly declares such attempts to be an open insult to our multi-ethnic people, who paid the highest price to achieve peace. The moves afoot to revise history are motivated by far-reaching political goals aimed at reconsidering the outcome of Second World War. As a result, they undermine the existing system of international relations and constitute a source of new tensions between European peoples and nations, all of which runs counter to the key principles of international relations and the interests of security and global stability.

The Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation strongly denounces attempts to interpret historical facts in a tendentious manner as a tool in today's competition for influence in the world.

The Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation counts on the understanding and support of those who are not indifferent to historical truth and who care about a peaceful future for Europe and the world at large.